

My Trip To New Orleans



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From Your

TOUR GUIDE

Dear Folks:

New Orleans was founded in 1718 by Bienville in the crescent of the Mississippi River, hence the title "Crescent City". From a French Colonial settlement New Orleans has grown to be the largest and greatest city in the South with a population of 700,000. In area New Orleans covers 366 square miles of land and water. New Orleans is geographically built somewhat like a saucer, the rim being the seawall on Lake Pontchartrain and the levees of the Mississippi. The lowest part of the saucer is about 4 feet below sea level, so all rain water falling in the lowest part has to be raised up to the rim and pumped out into the lake. An elaborate system of pumps located in different sections of our city plus a system of underground canals drain the annual average rainfall of 69 inches from our streets.

Our tour takes us through beautiful City Park, once a sugar plantation owned by Louis Allard. It has 1440 acres and is reputed to be the sixth largest public park in this country. The Delgado museum housing some of the art treasures collected in this part of the South faces us as we enter the park. Next come the duelling oaks where affairs of honor were settled. We drive past the picnic grounds — live oaks festooned with moss. The Suicide Oak where a number of people have ended their lives.

Passing Metairie Cemetery we drive along Pontchartrain Boulevard into Carrollton Avenue, named for General Charles Carroll, who, with his Tennessee Volunteers, helped General Jackson defeat the British in the War of 1812. Carrollton Avenue forms a part of the 250 mile floral trail with its sunken street car lines to hide the tracks and cut down the noise of the street cars. We pass the Waldo Burton Home for Protestant Boys, the Notre Dame Seminary and Lafayette Public School into Fontainebleau Drive, introducing our finer residential section.



Typical St. Charles Avenue Home

Entering Audubon Boulevard, we see the Huey P. Long Memorial residence, where the late Senator lived with his family. The Sugar Bowl, the nation's second largest Bowl game, is played at the Tulane Stadium, our next point of interest. The stadium, next game, will seat eighty thousand persons. We drive through the Tulane and Newcomb campus seeing McAlister Auditorium, Dixon Hall, Howard-Tilton Library, etc.

Our drive now takes us into St. Charles Avenue, our finest residential street, sometimes called the street of churches. This is truly millionaires' row, with its antebellum homes. We pass Audubon Park, Loyola



Orleans Club

University, Jewish Children's home, Gilbert Academy, Margaret Clark's home, the Orleans Club for Women, and the home of the man who cornered the cotton market. Some of the streets we cross are named for Napoleon's victories. As we drive along the Avenue you will see every sort of architectural style, no two homes built alike, and none of the older homes is less than 75 years old.



City Hall and McDonough Monument

Next we encounter the Shriner's Mosque, the Public Library, Pythian Castle, Lee Circle and the old Howard Library. We go into Camp Street, oldest street in the "American" side of New Orleans, and past St. Patrick's Church, third oldest here, Federal Building, the main Post Office, Lafayette Square. The Monuments of John McDonough, Henry Clay and Benjamin Franklin are in this square. We then pass The Times-Picayune, our leading newspaper, 114 years old. It was named for the Picayune coin minted here at the Orleans mint. From the coin we get the expression about people being "picayunish," meaning small.

Due to the lack of rock foundation we don't have any real tall buildings, our tallest being about 23 stories high. Looking one block to our left we see the 18 story Masonic Temple building, one of our tallest. We are now passing International House, an organization created to stimulate trade from mid-continent United States and the Latin American countries through the port of New Orleans. The International Trade Mart, which we next pass, is where manufacturers the world over may rent floor space and display their items of merchandise, with a salesman present to take orders.

We are now entering Canal Street, our main business thoroughfare. It derives its name from the open canal that once extended in the center where the car lines are today. The canal was covered over in 1856 and now serves as part of our drainage system. The world's widest main street, Canal Street, is 171 feet across.



Aerial View of City and River Front

From the years 1928 to 1930 our city spent three and one-half million dollars putting in the marble sidewalks and center neutral ground, the lighting system, and repaving the thoroughfares. On our left is the old United States Customs House, built 100 years ago by General Beauregard. Henry Clay laid the cornerstone. The building was cleaned a few years ago, making it look like a new building.

We are now nearing the waterfront and on our left is the viaduct for pedestrians coming to or going away from the ferries that cross the Mississippi over to Algiers, New Orleans on the west side of the river.

We pass, now, Liberty Monument, placed here to commemorate a battle fought at this location in 1874 between the Citizens White League and the Metropolitan Police, during the days of reconstruction. The result of the battle was the departure of the carpet-baggers from New Orleans.

We are now looking at the Mississippi River, an Indian name ,meaning Father of Waters. At this point the river is 2300 feet wide and in depth it ranges from 30 to 80 feet at the edge of the wharves, reaching a depth of 100 to 180 feet in mid-stream.

The river is the Port of New Orleans, second largest in this country. There are eleven miles of wharves, or docks, fitted to handle any type of cargo. The principle export is grain, last year enough was shipped from here, that if made into bread, there would be



First Skyscraper in New Orleans

enough for one and one-quarter loaves for every living person in the world. When you consider that there are more than two billion people, that is a lot of bread. Last year, the port received one out of every four cups of coffee consumed in this country. Here, the coffee is "black as night, sweet as love, hot as Hell, and if it don't stain the cup, it was not made well!" Bananas are another principle import—17 million bunches being unloaded last year. Other imports are hemp, sisal, burlap, bauxite, mahogany, balsa wood, cocoanuts, copra, chicle, raw sugar, nitrate, etc.

Leaving the riverfront, we drive back Canal Street. All of New Orleans on our left is Uptown, South; all to our right is Downtown, North; the riverfront is called Front-of-town; the business section, In-town; and out towards the lake, Back-of-Town. Those are the famous directions. Because the river flows north, south, east and west around New Orleans, we don't use the cardinal points for directions.

We've shown you the modern American side of New Orleans, and, now, as a contrast, we take you into a European setting right here in modern America . . . the French Quarter, the original city of New Orleans, founded in 1718 by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur De Bienville, who came down the Mississippi River in search of a suitable location to establish a base near the mouth of the river.

There are one hundred-odd squares in the old city, generally called the French Quarter, but officially known as the Vieux Carre, meaning "old square" in French.

All the buildings, you will notice, are built right out to the sidewalk, because it wasn't safe to have a lawn or a porch on the street level. Balconies and galleries were built high and inside the privacy of the home was located a patio, or courtyard, where the family might relax in the safety and privacy of the home.

Very few buildings date back less than one hundred years, though a few have been built in modern times, the Civil Courts Building on Chartres Street being one of the few. At the corner of St. Louis and Chartres streets we find Pierre Maspero's Exchange, a place of trade and barter in the early days. On the second floor of this building the Battle of New Orleans was planned by General Jackson and the pirate-patriot Jean Lafitte.

The battle was fought six miles below New Orleans, on the plains of Chalmette on January 8, 1815. The British were 12,000 strong, all well trained men under General Pakenham. General Jackson had a makeshift army of 3,600 men — Tennessee and Virginia sharp-shooters, Lafitte's pirates, negro slaves and free

men of color. General Jackson had his men dig a shallow trench and throw up a breastwork of cotton bales and earth. Behind this the General instructed his men to hold their fire until they "could see the whites of the British eyes." When the smoke of battle had cleared, the British had retreated leaving 2237 men killed and wounded, including General Pakenham. The American losses were 65 wounded and 6 killed. The battle lasted only two and a half hours, and was fought 14 days after peace had been signed. Slow communications caused that delay.

On the far right corner is the house offered Napoleon as a refuge in 1821. He died before plans could be carried out to bring him here from St. Helena.

On the far left corner we see the remains of the St. Louis Hotel. In its day it had 400 rooms, and under the rotunda of the hotel was a slave block. Here, it is believed, Abraham Lincoln witnessed the sale of slaves that gave him his idea of Emancipation.

Looking to our left we see our oldest French restaurant, Antoinettes, being operated today by the third generation of the same family in the same location.



St. Louis Cathedral, General Jackson and Jackson Square

Driving on down Chartres Street we come to Jackson Square. This being the most historical spot in New Orleans, we will park the car and make a walking tour of this section. Jackson Square was laid out in the original plans of the city by Bienville and his engineers, Pauger and DeLatour and was called La Place D'Arms. The name was changed to Jackson Square

after the equestrian statue of General Andrew Jackson was placed in the center of the square in 1856. It shows the General saluting his soldiers before the Battle of New Orleans. The statue weighs 10 tons, made of bronze, and cost \$30,000.

The beauty of the square and all the buildings surrounding it can be attributed to the Almonaster and Pontalba families. The St. Louis Cathedral is the third church to be located on its present site. The first church built in the beginning of the city was destroyed by a hurricane in 1727. The second church was de-



The Presbytere

stroyed by the fire of 1788. The cornerstone of the present building was laid in 1789 and the church dedicated on Christmas day of 1794. The church is named for St. Louis, the patron saint of the city of New Orleans. Don Andres Almonaster furnished the money for building the structure and is one of the 60 people buried in the church. Every Saturday a prayer is said for the repose of his soul.

To the left of the church is the Presbytere, former home of the Capuchin Friars, built in 1813. It is now the Louisiana State Museum of natural history. On the right of the church stands the Spanish Cabildo, former capitol of Spanish Louisiana. It was built in 1795 by Don Andres Almonaster to replace the earlier structure which had burned in the fire of 1788.

Here Louisiana was formally transferred from France to the United States on December 20, 1803. The first Protestant services in Louisiana were held here on the second floor after the transfer. Until that time Louisiana had been a strictly Catholic province.

In one of the prison cells at the rear of the Cabildo, Lafitte's brother Pierre, was confined. Shortly before his services were wanted for the Battle of New Orleans he mysteriously escaped.

In 1825 the Cabildo was fitted out as a residence for the Marquis Lafayette during his visit to New Orleans. Also in the building were entertained at one time or another, General Jackson, Henry Clay, Presidents Taft, McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt and many others. It is now the Louisiana State Museum of Historical relics.



Gateway to Jackson Square

Almonaster had one child, a daughter, who married the Baron Pontalba. After living in the old country a few years, she came back to find the Creoles moving from the old city into the American side. To attract them back, she built, what is claimed, the first apartment houses in this country, the Pontalba Apartment Buildings, one on each side of Jackson Square. Because one building is the exact duplicate of the other, they are designated as the Upper Pontalba, toward uptown New Orleans and the Lower Pontalba,

toward lower or Downtown New Orleans. The Upper Pontalba is owned by the city, and the lower is owned by the state. Each building has about 50 apartments, and, being publicly owned, they were made modern in 1935 by W. P. A. The grill work in the buildings is cast-iron, and in every section of the gallery and balcony railing, the family monogram "A" for Almonaster and "P" for Pontalba is noted.

Walking out of the square to St. Peter Street, we view the Little Theatre, said to be the first in this country. The Little Salon, an exclusive women's club, and our first skyscraper, a four-story building, built in 1774. History tells us that when the fourth floor was added, people living near moved away for fear it might topple over on them. They had no idea a building that tall would stand in the foundations of that time.

Crossing over to the Cabildo we visit the cell in which Lafitte was confined, an 18th century kitchen, and the cell where relics of slavery days are on display.

Leaving the Cabildo, we visit the Bartholomew Basque House and courtyard. Built in 1795, it is one of four buildings in the French Quarter that bears a plaque designating this as having been a part of the Historic Buildings Survey conducted in 1938. All the data concerning the building has been compiled in the Library of Congress for future reference.



Bosque Courtyard

So far in our tour we have mentioned the name of John McDonogh on several occasions, and now we take this opportunity to tell you the romantic story of that man. He came here in 1800 as a young man, 21 years of age, and made his first money rowing people across the river in a skiff. In a few years, by saving his money, and through several business ventures he acquired a plantation across the river and had a few holdings here in New Orleans.



Pirates Alley

McDonogh fell in love with the daughter of a prominent family and because he was a Protestant, and the family Catholic, he was refused the hand of the daughter in marriage. So he made a vow that he would make his name live longer than the family that had spurned him. He sold all his holdings on

this side of the river, moved to his plantation where he became a hermit and a miser. Everything he touched, it seemed, turned to money and when he died in 1850 he left one and a half million dollars divided equally between Baltimore, his native city, and New Orleans, his adopted city. He stipulated that the money be used for educational purposes. In Baltimore the money was used to build one vocational school for boys, but here in New Orleans his contemporaries invested the money wisely, and from the interest accruing from the investment, there have been 35 McDonogh schools built, each one bearing his name with the number of the school.

McDonogh made three requests in his will. One was that the Bible be read every morning in all McDonogh schools, but never carried out; another that boys and girls be separated after finishing grammar school. For that reason we have no co-educational high schools in New Orleans. Every year, because he requested it, a delegation of children from every public school in New Orleans visits a monument in Lafayette Square to pay homage to the benefactor of our public school system.

McDonogh's girl friend, Elizabeth Johnson, was very much disillusioned and disappointed too, she joined an order of nuns and, 35 years later when she

became Mother Superior of the order, among the many people who came to extend best wishes was John McDonogh. It was their first meeting in all those years. When McDonogh died, amongst his effects was found a pair of ballroom slippers belonging to the young lady. He had treasured them all through the years. So you might say we have one-third of a public school system built on a broken love affair.

After a visit to the Deep South Shop, at 617 Chartres Street, we will carry on to visit the old St. Louis Cathedral. Having seen the church we will go back to the cars and continue on our tour.

Our next point of interest is old Ursuline Convent. Built in 1734, it is the oldest institutional building in the Mississippi Valley. It was in this building the famous "Casquet Girls" brought over from France to marry the bachelors of early New Orleans were quartered. To our left across the street we see the one-time dwelling of General Beauregard and the birthplace of Paul Morphy, chess champion of his day.



General Beauregard's Home

The Haunted House on Royal Street is next on our tour. This building was erected in 1780 by the Remarie family who occupied it until 1832. At that time, Madame and Dr. Louis La Laurie moved into the home with their eight negro slaves. The LaLauries were very high in the social life of the city, and the big balls and banquets put on by them were attended by the elite. The Madame, it seems, had a sadistic nature, taking special delight in torturing her negro slaves. Rumors of hearing the screams of the slaves at all hours of the night were going on around the neighbor-

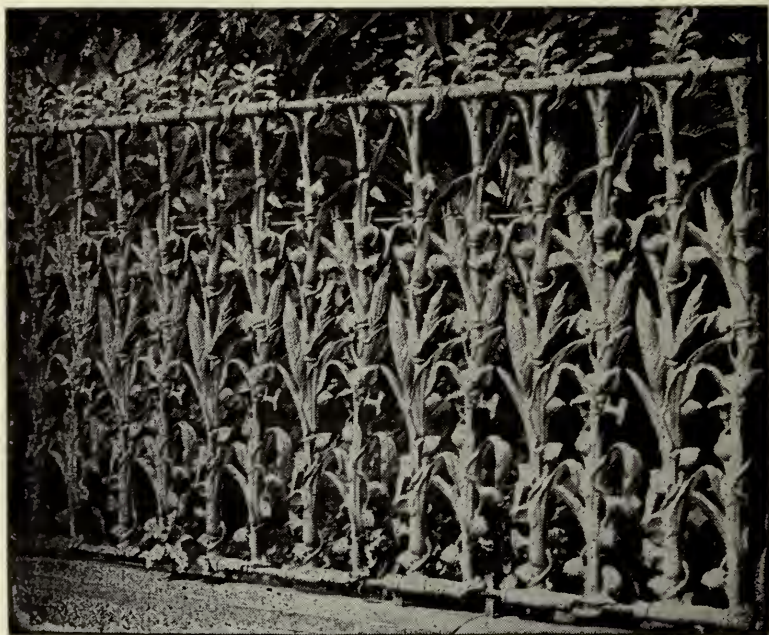


Haunted House

hood, but due to the Madame's social position, her friends refused to believe them.

One day, while the Madame was out visiting friends, a fire broke out in the building, and when neighbors went in to put out the flames they found the torture chamber, with some of the victims. Madame

had a narrow escape from the wrath of the people. She escaped to Mobile and took a boat back to France. The building is now an apartment house.



The "Carnstalk" fence, at 915 Royal Street, in the old French Quarter of New Orleans. Fence is made of cast iron.

Royal street was the business street of the old city. Stores were on the lower floors and living quarters were above them. Almost every building, you will notice, has the ornamental iron-work in the galleries and balconies. There are numerous designs, some representing fruits, flowers and vegetables, others the French and Spanish lace-work designs. As we drive along

Royal street we see the famous cornstalk fence; Madame John's Legacy, built in 1727, our oldest building; antique stores; patio restaurants and early bank buildings.

You will notice the signs of fur dealers along Conti street. It is hard to believe, but Louisiana is the leading state in the production of commercial fur pelts. In the marsh country you will find muskrat, mink, otter and beaver abound. There have been seasons when Louisiana produced more pelts than all the rest of the United States, the Dominion of Canada and Alaska thrown in for good measure.



Old United States Mint Building

We are now nearing the Old French Market, one of the city's land marks, founded on the site of a Choctaw Indian trading post. The market is divided into sections housing the butcher's market, retail fruit and vegetable stalls, truck farmer's market and two famous coffee drinking places where nothing is served except coffee and doughnuts all day and all night. They never close. The "Morning Call" coffee stand is the final stop on our night tour.

Driving past the French Market we pass the old United States Mint building where the Picayune coin was minted. It is now a part of the Coast Guard. We drive into Esplanade, the old Spanish Walk-Way where the nobility lived during the Spanish Domination. We see the home of Arnaud of French restaurant fame, the Estavan Miro home, and the former home of Governor Claiborne. Into Rampart Street we next see the first Masonic Lodge, 1794, the Convent of the Carmelite nuns, Marie Laveau's home and the Municipal Auditorium.

Next we cross Basin Street, famed in story and song, the one-time main street of the old tenderloin section.

We arrive now at the old St. Louis cemetery, where we shall leave the cars and walk through the cemetery communing with the spirits. The cemetery is owned by the St. Louis Cathedral and dates back to the beginning of New Orleans. The walls around



Burial Wall in St. Louis Cemetery

the cemetery were built with the idea in mind that should a family have a death and have no tomb constructed, it was possible to rent or buy a crypt in the wall.

Eventually, during so many yellow fever epidemics, the cemetery was filled with burials and some means had to be found to conserve space. Since cremation was not allowed, space could not be conserved in that manner. Through experimentation it was found that here in this climate a body will normally go back to dust in one year's time. So, there is a provision in all

our cemeteries that every year and a day, if you have a death in the family, the tomb may be opened and used again. The old coffin is burned, the bones of the previous burial shoved back into the bone receptacle, the new burial, with a new coffin interred, the crypt sealed. One year and one day it can be used again in this same manner, if necessary. In this manner one generation can be buried in one family tomb. Leaving the cemetery we will drive you back to your respective court.

If you have enjoyed our tour, and if you find anyone down the highway just half as nice as you've been, send them to us, we'll appreciate it. Bon voyage!

Mardi Gras, New Orleans' most distinctive social feature, has been declared by competent critics and historians to equal the spectacular triumphs of ancient Rome in its beautiful parades.

Every year thousands of visitors travel hundreds of miles to participate in the festivities, and the gorgeous pagentry of these unique fetes have often tempted other cities to rival them — but New Orleans has always reigned supreme as the "Carnival City."

The Carnival begins with the First Grand Ball and culminates in the magnificent festivities of Mardi Gras on Fat Tuesday, the Lenten season beginning the day after, Ash Wednesday. The Carnival originated in Rome, Paris derived her Carnival from the Eternal City, and New Orleans derived hers from Paris.

New Orleans inaugurated her street processions in 1837. In 1857 a society called the "Mystic Krewe," now known as the Mystic Krewe of Comus, was organized. On Mardi Gras this organization presented a series of moving tableaux taken from Milton's "Lost Paradise" terminating in a Grand Ball. Since then, similar organizations have been formed. Now the Mystic Krewe of Proteus, the Mystic Krewe of Comus, the Mystic Knights of Hermes and the Mysitc Krewe of Babylon also present magnificent night parades and balls; Mystic Krewe of Mid-City holds a parade on Sunday afternoon and King Alla holds a gorgeous water carnival on the Mississippi river the Monday preceding Carnival, with balls following parades; the others give a series of balls.

The parade of King Nor, in which children of both the parochial and public schools of the city join in colorful display, is held at noon the Saturday preceding Carnival. The Krewe of Venus, ladies' Carnival organization, had its first parade in 1941, the Sunday afternoon following Mid-City. There is general masking on Carnival Day.

Rex made his first appearance in 1872, this organization being formed for the purpose of bringing all the maskers of the city for the entertainment of the Grand Duke Alexis, who that year was the guest of the city. Rex has appeared annually ever since and is called the "King of the Carnival." His court is composed of Dukes and Peers of the Realm, appointed from the best social circles of the city. Rex, and all the other organizations choose a Queen, and this lady



King Rex at City Hall

invested with Royal Symbols is known as the "Queen of the Carnival."

The annual parade of Rex takes place at noon on Mardi Gras Day and is a wonderful spectacle. At night Rex gives a magnificent ball and holds a reception where the King and Queen and their Court receive their guests.

Although the major organizations sponsoring the parades hold magnificent balls after their parades, there are also several long established Carnival Clubs which sponsor Carnival balls, but do not hold parades

NEW ORLEANS IN 1828

—A Rhapsody—

By Colonel James R. Creecy

**(In "Scenes from the South", published in
1860-275, 276)**

Have you ever been to New Orleans? If not, you'd better go.

It's a nation of queer places; day and night a show!

Frenchmen, Spaniards, West Indianians, Creoles,
Mustees,

Yankees, Kentuckians, Tennesseans, lawyers and
trustees;

Clergymen, priests, friars, nuns, women of all strains;

Negroes in purple and fine linen, and slaves in rags
and chains;

Ships, arks, steamboats, robbers, pirates, alligators,
Assassins, gamblers, drunkards, and cotton specu-
lators,

Yellow fever in February—muddy streets all the year;

Many things to hope for, and a dev'lish sight to fear!

Gold and silver bullion—United States bank notes,

Horse racers, cockfighters, and beggars without coats,

Snapping turtles, sugar, sugar houses, water snakes,
Molasses, flour, whiskey, tobacco, corn and johnny
cake,

Beef, cattle, hogs, port, turkeys, Kentucky rifles.

Lumber, boards, apples, cotton and many other trifles.

Butter, cheese, onions, wild beasts in wooden cages,

Barbers, waiters, draymen, with the highest sort of
wages.

Now and then there are duels, for very little cause;

The natives soon forget them—they care not much
for laws.

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